

the famous pianist for the very last time in 2009. (Filar lived to age 95, having had his life's memories and musical genius wiped clean by Alzheimer's.) The passage aptly illustrates the writer's ability to capture emotion in words. Reflecting on these losses to such a beautiful mind and heavenly talent, the narrator observes:

But he's [Filar's] happy, spared the torment of some whose memories relive, with the same intensity of old, the unrelivable, their nights sleepless or riven with dreaming and redreaming the nightmare, their days troubled by the approach of night. Maryan, my Professor Filar, hangs onto his crystal shards, selective memories, his Gieseking glory, his Chopin *arabesques* and *cadenzas*.

So much of his life has disappeared, vanished. Where? I want to think the lost but divine memories have flown up to that starry cosmos where the Kabbalists believe scattered sparks of enlightenment will once again be united, where this fractured, suffering universe will be made whole. As for rediscovering those who were part of who he was and is, those calling his name, mystically channelling him through light-years, whispering "remember us," and "remember when," and "remember the time," who, brushing his back with a gossamer touch light as a Mozart melody, stir in him a ghostly sense of their presence, well, as for them, he'll find them in his book. [*From Buchenwald to Carnegie Hall*]

With the publication of this collection, Canadian literature gains a fresh, new, multivalenced voice, a voice to be listened to and praised.

Bravo, as we resplendently sing out in response to that art of all arts.

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MY LIFE ON THE ROAD

Gloria Steinem
New York: Random House, 2015

REVIEWED BY AMANDA
EDGLEY

My Life on the Road is both an autobiography and a history of feminist activism within the United States. Beginning by talking about her own childhood Steinem sets up her feminist roots. With a father always on the move and a mother suffering from the feminine mystique, Steinem started her life wanting to run away from the life both her parents led. Her literal life on the road, from birth, led her to travel across America and later India. At first, the work seems to be only an autobiography, spending much time on the backstory of Steinem's childhood, and moving into her work in India, but she then moves from the personal to the political describing her work on campuses and campaigns.

Her career as a journalist and desire to run away brought her to India. It was in India that she stopped dreading the road she was forced onto as a child and began to understand that it could teach her many things she would miss otherwise. From talking to local women, to campaigning, to lecturing, to taxi drivers telling their stories, Steinem shows us that travelling is a way to learn and to educate. Steinem's book is an example of how

travelling and interacting can create communities and build political support. Moving past her own life, Steinem shows the reader what it was like to be both a journalist and activist in the 1960s until the present day. She also lets us into the lives of the people she has worked with and met along the road, from Mrs Greene to Hilary Rodham Clinton.

Steinem gives us a personal story that sheds light on the many broad and historical books already written on the women's rights movement. It is her personal experiences that provide the details missing in other works. Rather than simply seeing the facts we get a worm's eye view of what it was like to be a part of the movement. The historic National Women's Conference or the "two-year process [that] probably shortened all our lives," is given a deeper understanding by looking at the little details. The organizing, the fights, and the fear are displayed in full view. Steinem's own fears of public speaking and of failure are also on display. Each historical moment teaches us something about America and Steinem. After the National Women's Conference, we see a jump in confidence for both Steinem and the women's movement: "Before Houston, I had said that women could run huge public events at least as well as men. After Houston, I believed it." We not only see the conference as a historical moment for women's rights, but as a catalyst for change and confidence in individual women. It is this view, that Steinem brings to all the events covered in her work.

Steinem unearths many small moments within the women's movement throughout her travels. Many works talk about the importance of talking circles and lectures, but Steinem shows us exactly how they work. How, with the help of her speaking partner Dorothy Pitman Hughes, they create trust and support within

strangers, and even change minds. She also shows us the racism her speaking partners and friends faced, and she provides details of the sexism she faced on the many campaigns she worked on. But the most important moments are the details we only get because she was travelling. If she wasn't a traveler than Steinem never would have learned of the fight for stewardesses to have workers' rights, or been told by taxi drivers about white supremacist groups she had thought were not around. Her travelling and journalism led her to not only work on women's rights, but all rights, from profiling James Baldwin to working with Wilma Mankiller.

As Steinem says, the road leads you "out of statistics and into stories" which is exactly what *My Life on the Road* has done for the women's movement. Steinem has done what she promises with this work. She brings the personal into the political and provides not only a detailed story of her own life, but the stories of the women's rights movement as a whole.

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REVOLUTIONARY MOTHERING: LOVE ON THE FRONT LINES

Alexis Pauline Grumbs, China Martens, and Mai'a Williams, Eds.
Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016

REVIEWED BY MELINDA
VANDENBELD-GILES

In the powerful and evocative *Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Front Lines*, co-editor China Martens



writes, "Actions and words, practical deeds and dreams, this is how we build tomorrow." Indeed, *Revolutionary Mothering* is a testament to life and love. It is a book filled with words that brim with hope and rage and love that can change the world. After spending days immersed within the words and images produced through this inspiring edited volume, I have run through the emotional rollercoaster and have come out the other side feeling my spirit renewed with expansive love, hope, and a lot of productive anger.

The editors of this volume reveal the multiplicity of mothering voices often marginalized and not given priority in a deafening world of racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and ableism. These are the voices of strong mothers of colour, queer mothers, young mothers, poor mothers, mothers who will not be pushed to the sidelines but who show us through their words and actions that they will not only persevere, but thrive, and fight for a more inclusive world—one in which we need not be afraid of our rage but can use our emotions to create social change. Productive rage and love co-exist and *can* and *should* provide the needed tools for revolution.

Bringing forward a powerful

theme of love and the bridging of humanity, the book is divided into six sections in which the personal narratives of mothering voices are heard. Whether the discussion is intergenerational connection, everyday radical mothering practices and revolutionary home-making, the violence of poverty, the feminism of everyday life and the queering of mothering, the beautiful and fighting stories of birth, and the powerful potential of words, the multiple voices of these mothers—oppressed and marginalized by a homogenizing society—become centralized and in their starkness reveal the potential of the human spirit.

In "The Creative Spirit," June Jordan writes, "Love is life force... Love is opposed to the delimiting of possibilities of experience." Such a powerful beginning to this collection creates a strong message of optimism while still acknowledging the everyday structural violence marginalized mothers must face. Co-editor Mai'a Williams describes it well when she discusses the "bureaucracy of every day life." All of these narratives reveal the revolutionary message of social change alongside the everyday and visceral realities of mothering, showing how it is time we recognize the powerful political potential within those everyday acts of caregiving and love.

Returning to the rage and passion of the radical and queer black feminists of the 1970s and 1980s, this edited collection shows how the power of words can be harnessed, and how we need to remember the politics of the home place as a site of love, resistance, and hope for the future. Framed primarily within an American context, we need to see more writing that comes from this powerful place of love, rage, and hope: writing that breaks free from standardized ideals and definitions and seeks to define itself. Taking this